

FILE APPEARED
ON PAGE 2ABALTIMORE SUN
12 January 1986

FILE ONLY

U.S. expected to sell Greece 40 F-16 fighters

New York Times News Service

WASHINGTON - The United States and Greece have signed an agreement for protecting military technology that opens the way for the sale of 40 F-16 fighter planes to Greece, a State Department official said yesterday.

The sale of two squadrons of the advanced planes had been pending for more than a year, the official said. The administration's decision to go ahead with the sale followed Greece's agreement, worked out in the last several months, to sign what is called the General Security of Military Information Agreement, the official said.

The agreement, signed on Tuesday, provides for both governments to prevent unauthorized dissemination of military information. It has now been signed by all NATO nations except Iceland and Turkey, the official said, and talks with the Turks are continuing.

The State Department official said there had been some concern in the administration, particularly at the Defense Department, over Greece's ability to protect advanced military technology from Soviet agents. This concern had been heightened by frequent statements by the government of Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu.

But, the official said, the situation began to improve last spring after the defection in Athens of Sergei Bokhan, a Soviet Embassy official who was later identified as a member of the GRU, the intelligence branch of the Soviet military.

Mr. Bokhan reportedly identified areas in which the Soviet Union was able to learn American military secrets through contacts in Greece. The United States has four bases in Greece.

Last fall, the Greek authorities arrested three Greek citizens in Athens, and they are now awaiting trial on espionage charges, the State Department official said.